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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 CAIRO 000147

SIPDIS
DRL FOR A/S POSNER
FOR NEA, NEA/ELA AND DRL/NESCA

E.O. 12958: DECL: 2035/01/31
TAGS: PREL PGOV PHUM KDEM EG
SUBJECT: A/S POSNER PRESSES GOE ON POLICE BRUTALITY, NGO
REGISTRATIONS

REF: CAIRO 47; 09 CAIRO 2164; 09 CAIRO 2064; 09 CAIRO 451
07 CAIRO 3214

CLASSIFIED BY: Margaret Scobey, Ambassador, State; REASON: 1.4(B),
(D)

11. KEY POINTS

-- (C) In meetings January 12-13, A/S Posner raised the issue of police brutality and prison conditions with senior GOE officials.

-- (C) Interior Ministry State Security (SSIS) Director Hassan Abdel Rahman asserted that SSIS has not abused prisoners "in the past ten years." He claimed that the MOI played no role in the case of Cairo resident XXXXXXXXXX who, according to multiple NGOs, was abused repeatedly by police in January 2009. Rahman claimed there are

-- (C) MFA Deputy Assistant Minister for Human Rights Wael Aboulmagd said the GOE takes the issue of police brutality seriously, and has increased the number of prosecutions against offices for torture and abuse.

12. (C) Comment: Per ref B, credible human rights lawyers believe police brutality continues to be a pervasive, daily occurrence in GOE detention centers, and that SSIS has adapted to increased media and blogger focus on police brutality by hiding the abuse and pressuring victims not to bring cases. NGOs assess prison conditions to be poor, due to overcrowding and lack of medical care, food, clean water, and proper ventilation. Per ref E, following a landmark 2007 sentencing of police officers for assaulting and sodomizing a bus driver, courts have continued to sentence officers to prison terms for brutality. End comment.

Police Brutality and Prison Conditions

13. (C) In a January 12 meeting with Interior Ministry State Security Director Rahman, A/S Posner asked what measures the GOE takes to address police brutality and difficult prison conditions, and what the U.S. could do to help. Rahman said "in the past ten years" there has been "no abuse of prisoners at all." He acknowledged there may have been "some violations" against "terrorists" in prison in the 1970's and 1980's. Posner raised the case of XXXXXXXXXX who was abused by police in XXXXXXXXXX according to multiple NGO reports (refs C, D). (Note: The Ambassador raised this pursue university studies, he claimed, and he noted that the government is focused on prisoners' health and their rehabilitation.

14. (C) A/S Posner also raised police brutality with MFA Deputy Assistant Minister for Human Rights Wael Aboulmagd who responded that the GOE takes the issue seriously. Aboulmagd said that since 2005, the Interior Ministry stopped paying fines for police officers found to have abused detainees. He noted increased prosecutions against police officers for torture and abuse. Aboulmagd said the Interior Ministry is participating in human rights training through the UN Development Program, and internal courses. He opined that it would take a "generation of training" before the police accepted the concept of human rights.

CAIRO 00000147 002 OF 002

U.S. Support for Civil Society

15. (C) Rahman asserted that the U.S. funds NGOs and human rights organizations dominated by "communists and extremists." He claimed these "communists" do not care about democracy, and want to weaken the GOE in response to Egypt's movement away from the Soviet Union and toward the U.S. in the 1970's. The Ambassador pushed back, saying that the U.S. does not fund NGOs connected to the Muslim Brotherhood or extremists. She noted the U.S. funds NGOs to promote civic education, human rights training and election monitoring. She urged SSIS to allow increased registration of NGOs. A/S Posner urged Rahman to allow NGOs to register even if they are critical of the GOE.

16. (U) A/S Posner cleared this message.
SCOBEEY